PRESS RELEASE
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Survey Names Top-10 Digital County Governments

Folsom, Calif. – A national survey conducted by the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties (NACo) named the top-10 most technologically-advanced, cutting-edge county governments in the United States.

The 2004 Digital Counties Survey, which examined how county governments are evolving in their use of information technology (IT) to deliver services to their citizens, grouped counties into four population categories: 500,000 or more; 250,000-499,999; 150,000-249,999; and less than 150,000.

First-place honors in each respective population category go to San Diego County, Calif.; Johnson County, Kan., and Prince William County, Va., a repeat winner from last year (tied); Roanoke County, Va.; and Charles County, Md., another repeat winner from last year.

"The Digital Counties Survey is one of a series of studies we conduct throughout the year that examines how governments are applying IT to effectively serve their constituents," said Cathilea Robinett, executive director of the Center for Digital Government. "Our goal is to keep our fingers on the pulse of technology policies and practices in state, city and county governments, and acknowledge the hard work and effort put forth by of all of them."

All counties were invited to participate in the survey. Officials responded to a set of 17 questions and ranked their jurisdictions on a four-point scale, providing background data for final verification and validation.

"The 3,066 counties in the United States vary greatly in size and population," said Larry Naake, executive director of NACo. "The Digital Counties Survey awards effectively demonstrate how county governments of all sizes across the country are positively applying technology to deliver quality services to their citizens."

TOP 10 DIGITAL COUNTIES
Rounding out the top-10 ranking behind San Diego County in the population category of 500,000 or more are: Orange County, Fla.; Alameda County, Calif.; Bernalillo County, N.M., and Tulsa County, Okla. (tied for fourth); Snohomish County, Wash.; Sacramento County, Calif.; Hennepin County, Minn.; Wake County, N.C.; Fulton County, Ga.; and Montgomery County, Md.

"We are honored to receive this recognition for our use of technology," said San Diego Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Dianne Jacob. "We try to make county government accessible and user-friendly for all of our residents and e-access is just one of the ways we do it."

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Rounding out the top-10 ranking behind Johnson County, Kan., and Prince William County, Va., in the population category of 250,000-499,999 are: Sarasota County, Fla.; Seminole County, Fla.; Lee County, Fla.; Sedgwick County, Kan.; Boulder County, Colo.; Loudoun County, Va.; Polk County, Iowa; El Paso County, Colo.; and Larimer County, Colo.

Prince William County Information Systems Division (ISD) staff stays motivated by their desire to provide services and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "Our successes allow us to continue to invest in new technologies and methodologies that will expand our ability to meet our customers' needs," said ISD Chief Maneesh Gupta. "Previously seen as innovative, many electronic services have quickly been accepted and adopted by our customers."

Johnson County Manager Mike Press concurs, "Digital government is an ongoing effort in the county. We look forward to continuing to improve our services to our residents."

Rounding out the top-10 ranking behind Roanoke County, Va., in the population category of 150,000-249,999 are Yakima County, Wash.; Howard County, Md.; Clermont County, Ohio; Hamilton County, Ind.; Racine County, Wis.; El Dorado County, Calif.; Merced County, Calif.; Frederick County, Md.; and Jackson County, Ore.

Roanoke County Administrator Elmer C. Hodge said the county is committed to providing its citizens a high level of service, and technology is one of the methods used to achieve this goal.

"Through technology, we have provided our citizens and businesses a tool to interact with Roanoke County at their convenience," Hodge said. "Our strategy is to build on the solid foundation we have established and to continue to work toward expanding and enhancing our citizen offerings."

Rounding out the top-10 ranking behind Charles County, Md., in the population category of 150,000 or less are Nevada County, Calif.; Stearns County, Minn.; Napa County, Calif.; Oconee County, Ga.; Sutter County, Calif.; Olmsted County, Minn.; Albemarle County, Va.; Delaware County, Ohio; and Butler County, Iowa.

Charles County Chief Information Officer and Director of IT Richard Aldridge said his county has always been committed to connecting citizens and businesses to information. "The Department of Information Technology staff has met the challenge and succeeds in making IT work," he said. "Our citizens and businesses are very technology-savvy and would not expect less from their government. This award demonstrates that Charles County did not let them down."

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STATISTICS

- Eighty-eight percent of all respondents in the top three population categories have an IT strategic plan, and 45 percent of those have updated their plans in the previous two years.
- An average of 19 percent of all counties surveyed provide Web-casting (audio, video or live streaming video) of their county governing body meetings.
- Sixty percent provide meeting agendas or minutes on their Web sites.
- In the top two population categories, more than 50 percent of the counties allow online submission of job applications for 26 percent or more of available county positions.

The top-ranked digital counties will be honored by the Center and NACo at an awards reception held in conjunction with NACo's Annual Conference and Exposition, July 16-20, in Maricopa County, Ariz.

For more information on the Digital Counties Survey, Contact Rhonda Wilson at 916/932-1321 or rwilson@centerdigitalgov.com. Or visit www.centerdigitalgov.com.

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